

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2308

April 9, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

As you know, I have been approached by several first responder agencies, including local law enforcement, firefighters and rural ambulance personnel in reference to COVID-19, which is spreading across the nation at a rapid pace.

Our firefighters, law enforcement and first responders traditionally respond to calls for service and don personal protective equipment (PPE) when appropriate. PPE, such as gloves, gowns and masks, is in high demand during this pandemic and, as you can imagine, is running scarce.

The first responder agencies have informed me that they are using PPE at an alarming rate due to the virus and are dangerously low in their respective stockpiles. They are responding to calls for service, forced to assume the worst-case scenario on every call, and using gloves, gowns and masks because of potential exposure to COVID-19. This practice is not necessary for all calls and will deplete their respective PPE in short order.

Your Department of Health and Human Services Director states the “surge” of COVID-19 cases in Minnesota is expected in mid-June. If the first responders continue with the same practice of PPE use, these agencies will be out of their gloves, gowns and masks very soon.

We don’t have a definitive date for restocking these agencies with adequate numbers of PPE. That is why I request, by executive order during this worldwide pandemic, you allow our 911 dispatch centers to receive confirmed COVID-19 premise information from our Department of Health and Human Services who tracks these confirmed cases daily. The premise information can be easily placed into the 911 data base and inform our first responders of confirmed COVID-19 at the scene. This will give our first responders the opportunity to use their PPE sparingly and only when most appropriate.

Our firefighters, law enforcement officers and other first responders deserve to have this information when responding to calls for service. At the end of their shift, they need to have the assurance that they will not go home and expose their loved ones to this virus.

This executive order will only need to be in effect until the pandemic is over or you remove our state from the “emergency declaration.” At that time, all “premise” information involving COVID-19 which was placed into the respective 911 data systems can be deleted.

I do understand you may have staff who feel otherwise, but I strongly suggest you trust your Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety and those like myself, who have over two decades of law enforcement experience. Both the spirit and the letter of the law should be considered.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pete Stauber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pete" and last name "Stauber" clearly distinguishable.

Pete Stauber
Member of Congress
Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District